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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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2. On page 6, paragraph 31, Vodny Kanal should read Obvodnyy Kanal.

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SUPPLEMENT TO 50X1-HUM
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DATE OF IN

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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Population of Leningrad

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1. [redacted] Leningrad [redacted] total pop-
ulation amounted to 5,000,000, including approximately 1,000,000 illegal
inhabitants. The acute housing shortage in Leningrad was caused by
this large number of illegal residents. A person was not given a resi-
dence permit if he was not officially assigned a place to live. Many
people ignored this ruling and stayed in Leningrad illegally, moving in
on friends and relatives or living in some dilapidated hovel. Evidently
a person could get a job without having a residence permit from the
police, [redacted] several Soviet employees who were in this situation.
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2. Many of these illegal inhabitants originally came from the Baltic states
(constituting the only large minority group), Karelo-Finland and nearby
agricultural areas. They had been forced to move to Leningrad during
wartime evacuations and evidently could not or did not want to return to
their original homes. [redacted] the former farmers were able to earn
more money as workers in Leningrad than on a collective farm. Spot checks
were made to uncover illegal inhabitants. If caught, they were sentenced
to three to six months' imprisonment.

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Housing

3. Almost all housing in Leningrad was owned, controlled and allocated by individual industrial enterprises. Housing was distributed strictly in accordance with a person's rank. The income of an individual or his ability to pay was of no significance as rents were very low. Almost all families lived in a single room and shared kitchen and toilet facilities with several other families. The only families who obtained an apartment (two or more rooms) for themselves were members of the leading intelligentsia and a few Stakhanovites. Furthermore, an ordinance allowed some intellectuals (professors, et cetera) to have an extra room for "creative work". Nevertheless, even top ranking administrators and army officers had inadequate housing facilities. For example, a general who lived next door to us had but two rooms for his wife, two children and mother although he received a salary of about 8,000 to 9,000 rubles a month.
4. [] a rent of 1.40 rubles per square meter was charged for housing space under a certain norm. Space occupied above this norm cost three times this standard rent. [] this norm amounted to nine square meters per family member plus nine square meters for the family as a unit. Only a very small percentage of Soviet families in Leningrad were allotted this "norm". 50X1-HUM
5. [] two rooms (18 square meters and 10 square meters) of a four room apartment and shared the kitchen, toilet and bath with another family. The apartment was equipped with running water, electricity, central heating and gas (after October 1951). Hot water taps were provided but operated only once a year, when a commission inspected the apartments. Electricity was .40 rubles per kilowatt hour and gas cost .20 rubles per cubic meter. 50X1-HUM
6. [] a great deal of new construction in Leningrad, almost all of it housing. But the housing shortage is still an extremely serious problem in Leningrad despite this progress. It probably will be decades before it is solved. Lack of housing was still a major source of complaint among the Soviet population. 50X1-HUM
7. [] no construction of private houses in the city of Leningrad. In fact [] little or no private housing within the city, whether old or recently constructed. This is partially explained by the fact that wooden houses were torn down during the siege of Leningrad and used for fire wood. This provided needed fuel and also lessened the danger of widespread fires. This action is also a further explanation of the severe housing shortage there.
8. Quite a few private houses, or dachas, were being constructed on the outskirts of Leningrad. Most of these summer homes were tiny frame buildings. Many were built directly on the ground without concrete foundations. 50X1-HUM

Consumer Goods

9. There was always a sufficient quantity of food in Leningrad state stores and open markets following the 1947 currency reform. [] no shortages of goods in recent years which had not been present before. In particular, there was no noticeable deterioration of the consumer goods market following the outbreak of the Korean war. There were periodic shortages of certain products but these were due to seasonal production (in the case of fresh fruits and vegetables) or a breakdown in the distribution system. For example, butter would be unavailable for three or four days.

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10. There was also a considerable improvement in the availability, quality and assortment of textile products following the currency reform. This progress was continual. There was no slowdown in recent years. The main articles of clothing were always available in the last few years. Only certain grades and styles of clothing were hard to find. Some clothing items were subject to erratic deliveries (summer clothes were placed on sale in the winter, et cetera) but this was only true of specialized articles.
11. Furniture and other "hard" consumer goods were more readily available after 1949 or 1950. There were enough electrical appliances, cameras, radios and other "hard" consumer items on hand to meet demand. Television sets were an exception to this rule. They were difficult to obtain. Apparently the production did not meet the demand.
12. Most imported goods on sale came from satellite countries. All of these countries were represented. There were food products and wine from Hungary; shoes and textile products from Czechoslovakia; textile goods and some food from Poland; rugs and silk cloth from China; and furniture, photographic equipment, radios, television sets, optical equipment and electrical appliances from Eastern Germany. [redacted] canned pineapple was the only article observed on sale which had been imported from outside the Soviet bloc. With the exception of furniture and photographic equipment, domestic articles outnumbered imported goods in any given line. 50X1-HUM
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13. [redacted] many of [redacted] Soviet acquaintances claimed that Leningrad was better provided with consumer goods than other areas in the Soviet Union. The metropolis was favored in this respect. Reports from several German specialists who were transferred from Leningrad to other sections of the USSR confirmed this observation.
14. The prices of many consumer goods, particularly food products, increased after the introduction of a general price reduction law so that about 25% of the original price cut had been wiped out by the end of the year. This was accomplished by switching the grades of consumer goods after a certain time. No more third-grade fish, for example, was available and only the more expensive grades were on sale. What had really happened was that the store managers had simply switched the labels on such food products as meat, sausage, fat, butter and fish. What was formerly a third-grade product was now offered as a second-grade product. The result was an increase in prices. This occurred after each price reduction law. It was not merely a trend of the last few years. 50X1-HUM

Soviet Attitudes toward Living Conditions

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15. [redacted] the population of Leningrad was dissatisfied with present-day living conditions and [redacted] the low standard of living was the main source of popular discontent. To begin with, the present standard of living was considered unsatisfactory, quite apart from any comparisons with conditions in previous years or with life abroad. Secondly, the Soviet citizens [redacted] recognized that the present-day standard of living is still far below that of prewar years. Many Soviets remarked that the Government had promised to achieve the prewar level by 1950 or so but that this promise had not been kept. They welcomed, of course, the progress in this direction which had been achieved since the 1947 currency reform. But they felt that this was insufficient.
16. Speculation concerning a general price reduction usually started in Leningrad about six months before it was actually announced. The people always believed that this year it would come earlier. And they were always disappointed

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that the price cuts which were finally effected were not as large as expected. [redacted] shoppers expressing such sentiments. This was particularly true after the 1951 and 1952 price laws. 50X1-HUM

17. A few Party activists tried to blame American foreign policies for this state of affairs. They stated that the aggressive policies of the United States forced the Soviet Union to devote large sums of money to its armament industry. [redacted]

[redacted]
there was widespread disappointment over the government's failure to completely restore the economy by 1950 or 1951. 50X1-HUM

18. The Leningrad population particularly complained about high food prices, the serious housing shortage and the high prices of vodka and similar articles. The supply of consumer goods was never a major problem in Leningrad after 1947. And clothing prices were apparently not a constant preoccupation because these items seldom figured in a family's budget. 50X1-HUM

Social Relations

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19. [redacted] there was much more mixing between social classes in Leningrad than is the case in Germany. For example, [redacted] no special clubs or night clubs which were maintained for or patronized exclusively by the upper classes. One could observe workers sitting next to top bureaucrats at Leningrad's best night club, the Hotel Astoria. Or professors played alongside of workers at the numerous chess clubs in the city. Also typical was the fact that a soldier would stop and ask an officer on the street for a light, something which never would happen in Germany.

20. There were no separate facilities for workers and leading personnel in the institute. Institute-sponsored celebrations or festivities were attended by workers and bosses alike. The only exception that comes to my mind was the dining room set aside for the exclusive use of the ten top administrators in the plant. 50X1-HUM

21. The institute director was held in great awe by the average worker. His powers were greatly feared. But a comradely spirit prevailed between workers and engineers. [redacted] the average Soviet worker was apparently not envious of the privileges granted to top-level personnel, especially the privileges prior to the currency reform. And they did not seem to resent the latter's high wages. These wage differences were considered normal. To sum up [redacted] no tension between the two social groups. 50X1-HUM

22. Most of the engineers at Institute 49 [redacted] apparently came from families of the intelligentsia. If this observation is 50X1-HUM typical, it indicates that upper social elements in the Soviet Union were fairly stable and stratified. On the other hand, this class has apparently been expanding since the end of the war as many more young people are studying at higher educational institutions than ever before.

Religion

23. [redacted] a surprising amount of religious devotion among Leningrad inhabitants. [redacted] the average Russian is by tradition and nature religiously inclined, hence the partial failure of government propaganda in this field. Only four churches in Leningrad were still open and functioning, including a large cathedral, two medium-size churches and one small church. 50X1-HUM

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The latter, called the "French church" in Leningrad, was a Catholic church headed by a Polish priest. The other three were Orthodox churches. [redacted] no Protestant church or synagogue open in Leningrad.

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24. The Leningrad churches were always well attended. They were so overcrowded on church holidays that even the surrounding streets were occupied by masses of people. All social classes attended church and surprisingly many young people. [redacted] 30% to 40% of the church-goers were under 40 years of age. 50X1-HUM
25. The major church holidays, especially Easter, were celebrated by great numbers of people in Leningrad. This was apparent by the tremendous increase in buying before Easter, especially of vodka, pastries and flour. Religious holidays in memory of the dead were also observed by a great many people. These holidays were observed in the Russian tradition. The people brought their food and vodka to the cemetery and made a day of it. The crowds were so great that even sidewalk stands were set up for the sale of food and drinks. 50X1-HUM
26. Church marriages were not too common. But religious ceremonies were conducted for many funerals and baptisms were frequent. It is also interesting to note that the Catholic church was permitted to hold catechism classes for the young people preparing for confirmation. 50X1-HUM

Crime and Vagrancy

27. [redacted] pickpocketing, as is apparently true throughout the Soviet Union, was rampant there. All of the German specialists at Institute 49 were victims at one time or another of these street thieves. Most pickpockets were young boys, 15 or 16 years of age. It was said that many of them were so-called "Stalin children" (children of unwed mothers) who were being raised in state orphanages.
28. They operated in crowded places, frequently using a razor blade to slash the pocket or briefcase of an unwary victim or as a means of defense. Once, while the wife of a German specialist was riding on a streetcar, a boy stole a billfold from a Soviet passenger. A woman sitting next to the victim witnessed the theft and called his attention to it. The boy slashed her face wide open with a razor blade hidden between his fingers and made his getaway during the turmoil. The Soviets in the streetcar warned the German woman never to make a similar attempt and to ignore any robbery she observed. 50X1-HUM
29. The Leningrad police had installed boxes on the street corners in the city for the return of lost articles. [redacted] the real reason was to encourage pickpockets to return stolen identification documents and [redacted] these boxes were mainly used for this purpose. 50X1-HUM
30. Although their number seemed to have declined somewhat in recent years, there were far more beggars in Leningrad than in a comparable western European city. For one thing, beggars "worked" all public means of transportation, something unheard of in Germany. They were also found in large numbers in front of churches and kolkhoz markets. Many of them were cripples. [redacted] they were war invalids. And quite a few of them were women with young children. 50X1-HUM
31. Undoubtedly a large percentage of the illegal population of Leningrad (reportedly 1,000,000, as cited above) was engaged in begging, private trade

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and black market activities. Many of them congregated at an enormous junk market (Lumpenmarkt) in Leningrad, the so-called Parokhodka, located on the Vodny Kanal. There every kind of used article and many new articles which had been stolen were offered for sale. At least 100,000 people massed there on Sundays when many people came in from surrounding farm areas.

32. Most of the trading was in old clothes, articles which the commission stores would not accept. But you could also buy anything in the way of black market items or stolen goods; German radio tubes, radios, watches, medicine, et cetera. Once, the wife of a German specialist was very sick. The German was told by the attending doctor that she needed a particular medicine which was unavailable at the clinic. The German offered to send to Germany for the medicine, but the doctor said that that would take too long. The doctor suggested that the German try the Parokhodka. The German did so, made his contact with a black market operator and obtained the medicine within a day. This clinic, incidentally, was one of the leading medical establishments in Leningrad. 50X1-HUM
33. Many of the traders there were professionals in the game. They resold articles in the market at a profit. Or else they bought articles on Sunday and sold them at a profit in the nearby countryside during the 50X1-HUM week. But anyone could sell at this market. All that was required was a ticket, or bon, which was purchased for three rubles. A person having a bon did not have to present any identification. The police did not intervene in any of the transactions, even when some of the articles on sale were obviously stolen goods. All they did was check if a person had purchased his bon. 50X1-HUM

Comments:

Unlike the situation at most enterprises previously considered, the Germans at Institute 49 were isolated as a group from the activities and most personnel at the institute. The Soviet personnel with whom they worked had probably been selected by or were under the surveillance of the MVD.

The housing "norm" described for the city of Leningrad — nine square meters for each family member and nine square meters for the family as a unit — appears to be much too high. the housing norm in Lomonosov, a town near Leningrad, was set at nine square meters each for man and wife and none for children. This is more in line with housing standards in other parts of the USSR. 50X1-HUM

no recent shortages (since 1950 or 1951) of consumer goods in Leningrad. It may well be that Leningrad was an exception to this reported development since Leningrad was supposedly better provided with consumer goods than other regions of the USSR. 50X1-HUM

description of the junk market in Leningrad testifies to the ubiquity of black marketeering and private trade in the Soviet Union.

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